

St. Paul's Church
200 Block S. Pitt Street
Alexandria, Virginia

HABS No. VA-340

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Washington 25, D. C.

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200 Block S. Pitt Street
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Present Owner: Church

Present Occupant and Use: Religious

Description:

Brick, stuccoed to give appearance of stone; design features a triple arcade of lofty pointed arches and a stepped parapet returning at the corners to give the impression of towers. Pointed false windows here and traceried roundels above the arcade are for effect only. The Church has a gable roof and two tiers of windows, flat headed below and pointed above. The cross which crowns the front facade appears to have been a later addition according to early photographs.

Talbot Hamlin called St. Paul's quaint, rather than beautiful, but commented upon the distinction and beauty Latrobe achieved on the interior at relatively small cost.

Number of stories: Auditorium with balcony

Historical Data

Year of erection: Cornerstone laid 1817

Built for (first owner): Congregation

Architect: Benjamin H. Latrobe

Notable events and occupants

The organization of St. Paul's Congregation in 1809 resulted from the schism in Christ Church, a considerable number of adherents following the leadership of the resigning Rector, Rev. William L. Gibson. Old St. Paul's Church on Fairfax Street soon outgrew its quarters under his successor, Rev. Wm. H. Wilmer, and the present building was planned and the cornerstone laid in 1817, the Washington Lodge of Masons officiating. Outside of Town was St. Paul's cemetery where Alexandria's "Female Stranger" lies buried.

Among distinguished communicants were Hon. and Mrs. Bushrod Washington of Mount Vernon and Major and Mrs. Lawrence Lewis of Woodlawn. Judge Bushrod Washington was a personal friend of Latrobe which may account for his connection with the building. Also we learn that Rev. Wilmer had been previously connected with St. John's in Washington, which was a Latrobe building. During the Civil War, the Church was used as a Federal hospital and the Rectory as a commissary. Mary Lindsay's Historic Homes and Landmarks reproduces a photograph of the Church taken at this time.

References: Talbot Hamlin, Greek Revival Architecture in America...
N.Y., 1944, p. 32. Mary Powell, History of Old Alexandria, Virginia,
1928, pp. 119-120. HABI form prepared by T. Russell Jones and Worth
Bailey, HABS, National Park Service.

Approved Oick Sutton Date Feb. 16 1959
Chief Architect

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